DISCOVERING THE EMPIRE: JULIJA PRANAITYTĖ'S GUIDEBOOK TO EUROPE AND ASIA

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ABSTRACT *The significance of Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją (1914), the guidebook by Julija Pranaitytė, a Lithuanian intellectual from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, depended not just on the fact that the author was the first Lithuanian female traveller to comprehensively document the experiences of a modern tourist in the early 20th century, but that the book itself was the first guidebook to the Russian Empire to be published in Lithuanian.*

The guidebook is an attempt by member of the intelligentsia with strong Catholic views to provide practical information about a modernizing and increasingly mobile world. Thus, the intended target of Pranaitytė book is twofold. Firstly, it is more mobile yet still poorly educated working-class reader who is being constantly warned about possible threads of being fooled or cheated. The reader could find advice in guidebook about things worth having while travelling, how to communicate, and what to expect. The guidebook also provides historical information about places visited, cultural insights, similarities and differences to Western society in such a way the book could be interesting and useful for middle-class traveler as well.

There is also a more general problem relating to the author's approach to the guidebook: what representations of different cultures and nations did early 20th-century Lithuanians share, and what did these representations mean in the religious, imperial and international contexts of the time? As is often the case in travel literature, history is presented here selectively, taking into account the dominant cultural monologue. It has a clear purpose in Pranaitytė's guidebook: to spread a vision of the moral and religious superiority of Western and Christian culture. However, having in mind that growing number of workers and middle class were engaged in Lithuanian national movement at the beginning of 20th century, this prejudice becomes paradoxical because Empire's religious and cultural values are shown as cultural foundation for discovering new parts of late Russian Empire.

KEYWORDS: *Pranaitytė; travel; modern tourism; Russian Empire.*

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the Lithuanian provinces of the Russian Empire, just as in the rest of the empire, the development of capitalism, the modernisation of society and multicultural nationalism changed many traditional features of society, including leisure time. Tourism, one activity related to modern leisure time, allowed people to experience the changing world in a direct sense, while social mobility and the cosmopolitan experiences they had helped adjust their own identities. In this article, working with the ideas of the tourism theoretician Dean MacCannell, whereby

‘one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general ... the empirical and ideological expansion of modern society [is] intimately linked in diverse ways to modern mass leisure,’¹

I shall discuss the origins of modern tourism in beginning of 20th century Lithuania. A thorough analysis of leisure travel is based on a close reading of a source that is not yet recognised in Lithuanian historiography, the travel guide *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją* (From a Journey around Europe and Asia, 1914), by Julija Pranaitytė.

Knowledge before rumours

The history of tourism, like many elements of beginning of 20th century modern culture, spans several centuries, whereby journeys and travelling with the aim of discovering unfamiliar places were understood not just like entertainment but as part of a Classical education. Young aristocrats ready to embark on their Grand Tour ideally sought to experience first-hand key aspects of continental European culture and architecture: life in Germanic cities representing the Middle Ages, Renaissance Italy revealing the practical application of Classical studies, and Reformation Europe. The belief was that a mature and harmonious person would return home on completing this initiation.² This type of journey was experienced as the final stage in an aristocratic education by members of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's elite, such as

¹ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist. A new theory of leisure class* (Los Angeles, 1999), p. 1.

² *Grand Tour. A Journey in the Tracks of the Age of Aristocracy*, edited by R.S. Lambert (London, 1935), p. 14.

Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, who travelled around England and France for several years in the second half of the 18th century. During the journey, he was to become familiar with different political systems, to recognise what determined the rapid development of these countries, and generally, on his father's orders, to 'save time' and avoid 'airy adventures and flirtations'.³ From the first half of the 19th century, members of the elite were travelling not just in foreign countries, but turned back to territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Vladas Sirutavičius, referring to travel accounts from this period, claims that reminding readers of the grandeur of the former state was the main motive. When visiting churches, monasteries and castles, it was very important to take in historical information, which was in such a stark contrast to the provincial status of the Russian Empire, and also to become familiar with the social and political realities.⁴ The travel literature by Władysław Syrokomla, Adam H. Kirkor, Teodor Tripplin and Stanisław Morawski, which was very well known to society at the time and to today's historiography, is replete with markers of the Romantic Age, such as nostalgia-based attempts to discover the utopian past of the land, and to experience the untouched nature of the country through individual efforts.

Closer to the turn of the 20th century, the influence of political, social and cultural processes started to change the prevailing approach, which suited the value system of the increasingly influential middle, nationally conscious layer of society.⁵ The factor of economic mobility also stands out: at the turn of the 20th century, internal migration and emigration abroad, to America for example, increased many times. Thus, in the public space, travelling and a geographical knowledge of the world in general,

³ V. Sirutavičius, 'Simbolinės geografijos: kelionės po XIX a. vidurio Lietuvą ir jų aprašymai', *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis 1999* (2000), p. 111.

⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵ This paradigm shift is visible not just in 19th-century Lithuanian society: it has been recognised by other researchers as well. A similar transformation has been described in a study by Swedish anthropologists: J. Frykman, O. Löfgren, *Culture Builders. A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life*, trans. A. Crozier (London, 1990), p. 51.

and even foreign-language textbooks, became rather common phenomena.⁶ In the late 19th century, transformations directly related to leisure travel increased, due to the cultural and social changes taking place: the traditional elite lost its exclusivity, trips became increasingly commercialised, and the foundations of modern tourism also started being transformed. It is noteworthy that in the late 19th century, these foundations only sporadically emerged in Lithuanian society and leisure culture. This is also evident from the lack of established terms: ‘travelling’ and ‘tourism’ were used more as synonyms rather than as opposites, whereas tourism did not have a negative meaning.⁷

This concept of tourist travel in Lithuanian context did not yet suit the representations of leisure travel that could already be found in popular culture in the Russian Empire. For example, in the chapter on the emergence of commercial tourism in the Russian Empire in the late 19th century, Louise McReynolds begins by analysing the novel by the popular writer Nikolai Leykin ‘Our Folk Abroad’ (1890), which gives a caricature of the habits of a Russian merchant family on their way to the international Exposition Universelle in Paris.⁸ On this journey, the rich and relatively well-educated couple (the merchant husband, with his practical knowledge of the world, and his wife, who graduated from a prestigious boarding school) experience a whole range of adventures and mishaps. As soon as they cross the state border, they realise that the husband’s linguistic proficiency is barely enough to order a drink, or for his wife to go shopping, while their

⁶ Remigijus Misiūnas states that up to the late 19th century, the number of Lithuanian emigrés in America reached 100,000, while before the First World War, this figure tripled. R. Misiūnas, ‘Lietuvių išeivių leidyba Jungtinėse Amerikos Valstijose XIX a. pabaigoje–XX a. viduryje: adresato problema’, *Knygotyra*, 67 (2016), pp. 23–24.

⁷ ‘Traveller’, ‘tourist’ and ‘excursion-goer’ were usually used interchangeably as synonyms in travel literature, guidebooks, periodicals and in teaching materials used in Lithuania at this time. Sometimes, specific means of travel, for example, the bicycle, were also used as synonyms for a traveller. E.g., one of the largest tourism clubs in the Russian Empire at this time was the Russian Society of Cyclists-Tourists. Г. Усыскин, *Очерки истории российского туризма* (Санкт Петербург, 2000), с. 35.

⁸ L. McReynolds, *Russia at Play. Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (London, 2003), pp. 154–155.

combined vocabulary is not even enough to understand which station they will need to change trains at. It is no wonder that on a journey such as this, the cultural difference is endless, creating a portrait of a helpless, lost tourist who becomes an object of ridicule to a Westerner.

In addition to these satirical images of culturally retrograde Russian or English tourists setting out on otherwise modern journeys, Julija Pranaitytė's travel guide presents the still rather rare, subjective opinion of a representative of Lithuanian culture of modern travel and the countries she visits. *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, the first book by this female Lithuanian traveller-writer,⁹ published in 1914, conveys the values of an economically stronger section of society, and the aim of this kind of work's to help avoid the culture differences described by Leykin; the effort is immediately obvious, and is worthy of deeper discussion. Unlike the works by Tripplin, Morawski, Syrokomla and Kirkor, who belong to the cultural realm of the first half of the 19th century, Pranaitytė's account offers a very distinct reflection of industrial life: the increased mobility of the middle class, which is inseparable from the expansion of the railway network and shorter working hours. The author notices this too, mentioning the Lithuanian migrant colonies in imperial industrial centres, and listing the Lithuanians who had careers in the Russia's East.¹⁰ Compared to works from the first half of the 19th century, Pranaitytė's travel guide conveys very well the unprecedented increase in the movement of ideas, goods and people, the closer proximity of areas that until then had been out of reach, and the low cost of travelling itself. It is no wonder that earlier epochs and the one Pranaitytė describes differ in terms of the dominant mode of travel: horse-drawn coaches had now been replaced by the popular railway, which was no longer a surprise to Westerners.¹¹ The circumstance that probably best

⁹ *Lietuvių Enciklopedija*, t. 23 (Boston, 1961), p. 413.

¹⁰ In various places in her work, Pranaitytė mentions seeing former officers, officials, notaries, clock makers, pharmacists, industrialists and different kinds of public servants travelling. Pranaičiū Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją* (Philadelphia, 1914), pp. 113–114, 200–202.

¹¹ Cf. W. Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, 2014).

reflected modern travel trends, forming the basis of Pranaitytė's book, the holiday travels of the emancipated and educated woman, was no less important. Pranaitytė also refers to tourists she met during her travels, not all of whom were from the aristocracy, but were, like herself, members of the middle class: more or less wealthy office clerks and their wives and children returning from resorts, students, cadets and military officers.

Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją is a collection of the author's impressions and photographs from 1911 travelling to America via Western Europe, and later to Lithuania, visiting Moscow and St Petersburg, Turkestan and the Caucasus, and is probably the first Lithuanian travel guide to these countries.¹² A piece of religious verse was chosen for the title page illustration, most likely taking into account the journey's destination, Muslim countries, which, translated literally into English main, would read: 'Heaven longs for him who seeks knowledge'.¹³ At the beginning of her book, the reader finds the author's statement that a geographical knowledge of the world should be the concern of each 'at least partially educated' person.

The decision to write down her experiences was based on the lack of travelogues works in Lithuania, thanks to which any contact with the modern world would often be a painful affair. The author must have felt this shortcoming professionally as well: moving to America in 1903, she worked for the Lithuanian Catholic press. Thus, the accounts of places she visited are often presented in the context of Lithuanian emigration, and seek to dispel any myths about the 'promised lands':

'it is no surprise that the uneducated Lithuanian villagers leave en masse to search for happiness elsewhere, led solely by hopeful stories about mountains

¹² Even though the book, published just before the First World War, did not receive wide acclaim, Pranaitytė returned to the travel literature genre several more times during the interwar period (*Laisvosios Lietuvos Atlankytų. Iš Pranaičių Julės Atsiminimų* (Philadelphia, 1928); *Pranaičių Julės, Viešnage Šeštokuose* (Philadelphia, 1925). These works will not be discussed here, as they are rather different to her first guidebook: they are fragmentary impressions from the author about interwar Lithuanian society.

¹³ Acknowledgment goes for Goda Jurevičiūtė for the help in translating this phrase from Arabic.

of gold, unjustly earned lordships, and the like, purposely devised by deceitful agents and dishonest relatives who emigrated before them.¹⁴

The author draws attention to this fact both at the beginning of her book and elsewhere, trying to warn about the possible dangers ahead. For example, in the section about Turkestan, she also writes about the 'trades of Bukhara', i.e., human-trafficking, various tricks used to entice people to travel to distant countries.¹⁵

As the ideas in the introduction about knowledge that is inseparable from travelling suggest, Pranaitytė's book can be considered an attempt to give readers the required cultural capital to help them avoid both comic and tragic situations. This is sometimes done by employing rather drastic stylistic measures: one of the author's first experiences in Paris stands out, where she advises being cautious on the particularly busy Place de Concorde, for this was not only where aristocrats lost their heads during the Revolution, but where an unobservant traveller should look out 'so as not to end up under a motorised carriage'. An image of a terrible accident, to which she was a witness, follows:

'A woman was walking in front of me with a man. Whistling right past her, the automobile took the edge of the woman's skirt, and she was immediately caught up in the wheel, and by the time it stopped, the poor woman was lying all bloody, with no arms or legs, torn to shreds. Her husband was crying, on the verge of losing his mind, while his beloved was already lying unconscious.'¹⁶

While there are more similar dramatic situations in the book, it is dominated by routine warnings and advice for future travellers.

Attention is drawn to the practical sides of travelling, and the differences between the Russian Empire and the West, so the author warns readers to take their own bedding on long journeys on Russian trains,¹⁷ and that one must sometimes resort to not

¹⁴ Pranaičiūtė Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 169–170.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 129–130. One of the first cultural faux pas made by the characters in Leykin's novel was that they set out on a journey to Western Europe with their own enormous pillows and quilts. Н. Лейкин, *Наши за границей. Юмористическое описание поездки супругов Николая Ивановича и Глафиры Семеновны Ивановых в Париж и обратно* (Москва, 2013), pp. 1–3.

very honest means in order to secure a place on a train,¹⁸ as well as other ways of making one's journey comfortable.

A tourist in Lithuania

Looking at the routes taken by Julija Pranaitytė, it is important to note that the American-Lithuanian's temporary return to her homeland was a clear half-way mark. After France, where she spent two years studying French language and literature, and after stopping over in Belgium and Germany, Pranaitytė crossed the border into the Russian Empire at Virbaliai, and, changing trains, immediately noticed something important to modern travellers: the slower pace in time and speed. According to her, compared to the passenger trains in America and Europe, the 'Russian passenger [train] was slow enough to make one want to jump through the window and walk instead.'¹⁹ Nonetheless, she quickly adds to her comment that the slow movement of the train had some advantages, as it allowed one to appreciate the beautiful Lithuanian scenery through the window unhurriedly.²⁰ Throughout her journey, the author paid most attention to people's habits, their way of life, morals, the economic situation, geographical features, and the landscape. However, the fact that she was looking for 'signs of Lithuania' in the country naturally had a particular meaning. As soon as she crossed the border, Pranaitytė travelled to the place of her birth, later continuing to the first large town on her travels, Šilavotas, which she called a 'harbour for academics' for the educational activities of Fr Antanas Radušis.²¹ Then she visited Kaunas, but was disappointed not to see any traces of Lithuanian culture there either, as there were no Lithuanian newspapers on the newsstands. Even when she could not find any printed Lithuanian material, the author was glad, and at the same time surprised, that Lithuanian was spoken so openly in some parts of the old town. According to her, one felt 'as if one was in the purest Lithuanian church

¹⁸ Pranaičiū Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, pp. 128, 276–281.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

village'.²² On this visit to Kaunas, she also went to the public park (run by the Sakalas Society), and to the summer restaurant run by the Lithuanian Economic Courses Board in front of the steamship port, where she found it important to add that 'the restaurant is popular with both Lithuanians and foreigners.'²³

Another stop in Pranaitytė's travels was Vilnius, the historic capital. Her description of it features both a selection of the most important places to the modern Lithuanian traveller, and their symbolic control. Since one of the most important things to the modern traveller in the second half of the 19th century was the choice of a hotel as a second home, she first describes the Lithuanian Hotel, which was near the Gates of Dawn, at 74 *Большая улица* (today's street *Didžioji*). From its name, the author assumed that the service would be in Lithuanian, but it soon became clear that just about any language except Lithuanian was possible.²⁴ Regardless of this fact, Pranaitytė stressed that in the summer ('in the tourist season'),²⁵ Vilnius would be visited by a number of Lithuanians. From the hotel, she went along *Георгиевский проспект* (today's avenue *Gedimino*), as it was known then, to a meeting of the Lithuanian *Rūta* Society, and visited Vilnius Cathedral after the morning meeting. Another site worth visiting in Vilnius was Castle Hill and the restaurant in the tower, where, also to the author's surprise, none of the staff understood Lithuanian. It appears that the inaccessibility at these places due to naive and nationally conscious aroused somewhat negative emotions in the nationally conscious Lithuanian woman, as she continues with a lament several pages long about how the name and historic greatness of Lithuanians had been erased from the history of early-20th century Vilnius. The passage ends with two impressive images: an exhortation borrowed from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to exact revenge in the name of the father (in this context, she refers to the lost history), and a portrait of Gediminas, the founder of Vilnius, lamenting the lack of solidarity.²⁶ These kinds of Vilnius-related expectations echo

²² Ibid., p. 62.

²³ Ibid., p. 63.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 76.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

a primordial nationalistic vision, so she pays little attention to the fact that Lithuanians made up only around 2 per cent of the population in Vilnius at the time.²⁷ Treading on the sore point of the weeping Gediminas and the historic capital where no one spoke Lithuanian, Pranaitytė reveals whom her book targets: The educated and modernizing reader who is constantly accustomed to the chosen national vision.²⁸

The fact that the author was concerned both with national reflection and herself as a tourist is evident from the times she repeatedly describes herself as a tourist, highlighting the fact that she was travelling during her holidays ('on vacation').²⁹ Just as important are the matters of maintaining a sense of order in the journey, and the effective organisation of time. This is characterised by her comments about Imperial Russian trains, and the events she decided to attend. For example, she criticises the Rūta Society's evening programme, which began at least two hours late.³⁰ The description of the evening, which ran well into the early hours of the morning, contains a reference to one of the symbols of modernity associated with the independent organisation of one's rhythm of life: the personal watch. In early-20th century Vilnius, Lithuanians out for the night were still using comparisons referring to the cycle of nature, and yet relied on a modern experience of time. One telling quote reveals this:

'While having fun, the second roosters crowed. Even though we did not hear their cries, but only implied it from looking at our watches, it was time to part. We wanted to rest.'³¹

The next day, the author concluded her visit to Vilnius by going to probably the most important Catholic shrine in the city, the Gates of Dawn, and stopping at the Lithuanian bookshops, identified as the core of the Lithuanian spirit.

²⁷ D. Staliūnas, 'Making a National Capital out of a Multiethnic City: Lithuanians and Vilnius in Late Imperial Russia', *Ab Imperio*, 2014/1, p. 162.

²⁸ For more about the implementation of nationalist Lithuanian spatial concepts in the early 20th century, see: *Lietuvos erdvinės sampratos ilgajame XIX šimtmeityje*, ed. Darius Staliūnas (Vilnius, 2015), pp. 165–170.

²⁹ Pranaičių Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, pp. 132, 135, 160, 255.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Deeper into the Empire

One of the aims of her summer travels was to visit her brother Fr Justinas Bonaventūras, a professor at the St Petersburg Theological Academy, who served in Tashkent from 1900. He had paid for her studies at St Catherine's Gymnasium in St Petersburg, and later her French language and literature studies in the school in La Chapelle-Montligeon in France. A friend, Fr Antanas Milukas, also encouraged her to explore Uzbekistan, saying it was 'a must', and to write about both Tashkent and 'the other famous places from the deep, dark past'.³²

Even though the book's title page boasts a declaration about seeking to discover and also to help her audience accumulate greater cultural capital, the text is certainly not short of rather rich elements of a semi-fictional nature that could arouse the potential reader's interest. In many cases, these are impressions based on cultural stereotypes that dominated nature and society in Central Asia: the traveller spotted enormous hurricanes through the window of her train; she endured violent earthquakes, spotted 'a slithering creature of enormous size' in the garden of Fr Pranaitis; and later on her journey she encountered Kyrgyz people exhibiting 'a heartfelt objection to Christians'; she saw Turkmen who looked like 'scarecrows', and police agents who mistakenly suspected the author and her companion (she travelled from Tashkent with her sister-in-law) as 'wanted criminals'.³³

As is rather common in travel literature from this period, Pranaitytė's accounts of foreign countries are dominated by a narrative on the origins, flourishing and decline of a foreign civilisation. Commenting on the last period, she draws the conclusion, intended to disturb the nationally conscious Lithuanian reader, that in general the sense of order and the foundations of Western civilisation that are not present in these countries are balanced only by the might, authority and support of the Russian Empire. The following example of the author's explanations and assessments is characteristic:

³² Ibid., p. 127.

³³ Ibid., pp. 94, 109, 122, 124, 159, 251.

'Hundreds of thousands of those poor creatures were killed and violated in the most terrible ways under the rule of the barbaric Asian tyrants. Now, when the Russians rule this land, what a difference there is! We, two strangers, travel with great comfort and without the slightest fear among Muslims, who hardly differ from their brutal ancestors, and whose wild instincts only the powerful Russian government can contain!'³⁴

There is no doubt that weaker and less developed countries lay ahead (this feeling, incidentally, only appears when the Russian Empire's border was crossed, and strengthened with each mile further east), while attempts at giving them a more Western face, i.e., to colonise them, are a natural course of fact. In the text, support for the mandate of imperialism becomes more evident in claims alleging that the Russian government not only conquered but also improved the lives of nations and people incorporated into the Empire. This approach reveals another point Pranaitytė considered as positive. Even though she does not make it herself, it does come across in her pro-imperialist arguments: the empire that makes the world more accessible also proposes its interpretation.

It is no wonder that in these kinds of travel works in general, including Pranaitytė's travel guide, a superior attitude towards other cultures, people and places prevails. This is noticeable when describing the comforts (or lack of them) available to travellers: the lack of restaurants and suitable accommodation,³⁵ the quick purchase of train tickets,³⁶ and the standard of hygiene in the countries she visited. For example, when writing about a body of water in Bukhara, she highlights how dirty the water for general use is ('worse than the water in Šakiai during the fair'),³⁷ and the diseases among people due to worm infestations.

Pranaitytė's writing also offers the reader and potential traveller a point of reference, normalising the differences between the observer and the observed, showing that what the tourist sees is normal for the place discussed, and not the result of various cir-

³⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 246.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 94–95, 128, 130, 215, 276, 282.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 173.

cumstances or controlling political forces.³⁸ Whether consciously or not, by calling the people living on the peripheries of the Russian Empire ‘fanatics’³⁹ or ‘wild mountain dwellers’,⁴⁰ she repeats the statements prevalent in imperialist policy, seeking to appropriate these territories and their populations. The settlement by ethnic Russians and other imperial nations in these territories not only signified conquest, but also the tsar’s mandate to improve the lives of local people being incorporated into the empire. The description of Vladikavkaz is a good representation of the author’s position:

‘The name of Vladikavkaz itself [literally ‘rule the Caucasus’] demonstrates the reason why Russia founded the city there in 1775 and the task it was given. It was a stronghold for defence from the wild mountain dwellers.’⁴¹

This position of the author, rationalising imperialism, is not so surprising, bearing in mind that Pranaitytė completed her studies at prestigious educational institutions in the Russian Empire, where she was undoubtedly introduced to the main Russian romantics (Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinski and Lermontov), who formed the 19th-century Caucasian poetic space.⁴² What might be surprising is that the author, who had spent a decade living in America, was in no way affected by the Second Boer War (1899–1902), the first of many armed 20th-century conflicts against a colonial government. Incidentally, the moral legitimisation for the conquest of the countries Pranaitytė visited was already starting to unravel in Russian society; one symptom of this change could have been Leo Tolstoy’s novel *Hadji Murat* (written in 1896–1904),⁴³ in which the military campaign in the Caucasus is strongly criticised.

Pranaitytė’s pejoratives for describing locals (‘primitives’, ‘wild’) are a reflection of the global cultural hierarchy that formed in the times of the Age of Enlightenment, at the top of which was West

³⁸ J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European tourism, literature, and the ways to culture, 1800–1918* (Oxford, 1993), p. 11.

³⁹ Pranaitytė Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, pp. 163, 175.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁴² S. Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge, New York, 1994).

⁴³ A highly censored version of the novel was published in 1912.

European culture. As the writings of Edward W. Said have revealed, this kind of representation of a different culture often turns into a cultural monologue, for behind the inclination to compare 'us' and 'them' lie numerous 'various cloudy provisions, associations and visions',⁴⁴ which usually point to a colonialist or imperialist project. It is not surprising that another feature of travel writing from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries is also characteristic of Pranaitytė's journey: she distances herself from local customs, and there is hardly any communication with local people. During the course of her travels around Central Asia, the locals Pranaitytė encountered often remain mute, only their nationality might be mentioned,⁴⁵ but she does not really initiate any conversations herself. Having reached Georgia, on her first night, Pranaitytė describes the following lesson in Georgian culture and language:

'Not having anything to do, we started a Georgian language lesson with the boy waiting on us. His big, dark eyes, and serious, bright face framed by dark curls, portrayed a clear picture of Georgia's beauty. He told us many words and sentences in his language, and would correct our poor pronunciation. However, apart from '*kamardzhioba*' (hello) and '*madlapt*' (thank you) I cannot recall anything else.'⁴⁶

In similar cases, the locals remain silent in Pranaitytė's writing, even when she does manage to communicate with them, for example, with porters who did not know how to describe a Catholic priest. On hearing the question 'would you like to go and see *pop bez boroda*' [priest wit no beard], the author describes her surprise:

'At first, I could not understand what kind of *pop* without a beard he was talking about, and only after further explanation did I realise that he meant a Catholic priest. I was right. Later on, I understood that was how the aborigines here distinguish priests from Orthodox clerics.'⁴⁷

⁴⁴ E. W. Said, *Orientalizmas* (Vilnius, 2006), p. 85.

⁴⁵ Pranaitytė's guidebook presents a combination of the author's own impressions and encyclopaedic facts, so sometimes at the beginning of a description of a location, the author identifies separate nations, for example, the Abkhaz, Svans, Adyghe, Ubykh, Nakh, Ossets, Chechens, Tushetians, Pshavs, Khevsurs or Laks, and adds that 'the [Caucasian] nations [...] can be divided into over 120 separate tribes with different languages'. Pranaičių Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 244.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 246.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 102–103.

Where sometimes communication using language was ignored, contact with locals (especially children) fluctuated between mutual appreciation and close exchanges:

'Going out into the street, we met a large crowd of children who had appeared from all the surrounding houses to stare at us, the unusual strangers. The appearance of Europeans, women, moreover, on some streets in Bukhara, was without a doubt considered a great rarity. It is no wonder that a street full of children rushed out to look at those weird people. And what beautiful children there were among them! Faces round, red, healthy. Others' eyes were wide and serious, like those of the mullahs. Their hair was mostly black. Their clothing that reached the ground was decorated with flowers in bloom, as in a garden. Generally speaking, the aborigines of Turkestan, especially the Sarts and Uzbeks, would above all take care that their children were clean and beautifully dressed [...] Nowhere have I seen such pretty babies as in Turkestan. But if you tried to get on their good side with coins, you'd have no luck. They do not take money. In several places I tried the reprehensible Lithuanian custom of getting young Muslim children to speak after ringing the bell bells, but they did not come any closer. But when I showed them some sweets, they swarmed like flies around honey, everyone ran up and even started climbing into our carriage. When we tried to hold them, showing a sweet, they would not pull away but let themselves be cuddled, which was very nice, as they are clean and beautiful, only a little too serious perhaps. The young girls had particularly fine facial features.'⁴⁸

The indistinct nature of the travel literature genre (it varies between mischievous adventures to philosophical treatises, and from political commentary to religious discovery) allows its creators to combine legendary, anecdotal and analytical forms,⁴⁹ which reveal the social class or links with imperial or colonial projects of representatives of this genre in different ways. This also comes across in Pranaitytė's travel guide, where we find advice for future travellers, and her own impressions from the countries she visited. Less attention is given to the question of gender, even though the structure of the text is composed on the basis of a holiday taken by an emancipated and educated woman. In several places, the author stresses that she is travelling around the eastern parts of the Russian Empire as a female tourist, admiring its might, which is what gives her the opportunity to embark on this type of journey:

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 176–177.

⁴⁹ P. Holland, G. Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor, 2000), pp. 8–9.

'Now that the Russians rule this land [Uzbekistan], what a difference there is! We two strangers travel with great comfort and without the slightest fear among Muslims, who hardly differ from their brutal ancestors, and whose wild instincts only the powerful Russian government can contain.'⁵⁰

Pranaitytė also took note of the situation of women in the lands she visited, which she often identified as 'slavery' or 'uncivilised'.

'The Sart women are held back from becoming educated because of their enslaved situation. Girls from the ages of eight to nine have their faces covered by coarse black sheets called '*chembet*'. Those who dare to uncover their faces in public, face having stones thrown at them by other men of their faith. Incidentally, my sister-in-law almost got to try the same treatment.'⁵¹ While crossing the Caucasus, Pranaitytė makes an even harsher summary of the status of the Ossetian women: 'The situation of the woman in Ossetian society remains one of the most painful questions the civilised world should have paid more attention to. The darker mountain dwellers do not even consider the woman a human. At birth, she brings her parents the greatest sorrow, and when she has grown, she is sold to a husband for a negotiated price, like a mindless animal.'⁵²

Louise McReynolds notices that travel literature can generally be interpreted as a perspective that structures the reader's view, prompting how someone who has opened the book might imagine themselves in unfamiliar surroundings.⁵³ Comparative researchers draw attention to the fact that, finding oneself in a foreign space, one is inclined to compare the strange and unfamiliar with known things, which allows for a new assessment or a rethink of the values of one's own society.⁵⁴ Thus, the presentation of this kind of view was probably a test of the cultural experiences Pranaitytė was familiar with. Even though she travelled as a woman, to whom, as for the majority of women at the beginning of 20th century, her own empire's power institutions were limited, when travelling in Muslim countries, she travelled like a white West European: she enjoyed her symbolic power and economic status. We could agree with the idea proposed by Anne McClintock, who

⁵⁰ Pranaičiū Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 132.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–121.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁵³ L. McReynolds, *Russia at Play*, p. 182.

⁵⁴ R.K. Wilson, *The Literary Travelogue: A Comparative Study with Special Relevance to Russian Literature from Fonvizin to Pushkin* (The Hague, 1973), p. xi.

discussed the gender aspect from the colonial perspective, that this was testimony to a social contradiction of imperialism: when travelling around the empire, a woman could feel more liberated, as being from a metropolis she can make use of certain privileges that were out of reach of the locals she saw on her travels.⁵⁵ In the case of the work analysed here, it is impossible to define strictly the author's opinion as she wavers between different identities. On most occasions, it remains unclear whether the claim by the 19th-century tourism researcher James Buzard can be confirmed that by offering a point of view, travel literature normalises the differences between the observer and the observed, and creates the impression that what the tourist sees is normal for a given object or place.⁵⁶ In terms of the situation of women, Pranaitytė's wish that 'the civilised world should have paid closer attention'⁵⁷ allows us to think that, given the gender-related circumstances, the situation could be improved, so it is open to political or other possible interventions.

The beauty and the danger of the mountains

Judging by the order of the text (the journey from Tbilisi to Vladikavkaz along the Georgian Military Route, crossing the Caucasus, is the culmination point of Pranaitytė's notes), we can see that the author was not so interested in anthropological comparisons, but sought to forget what was familiar by breaking out of her own space. The author does not hide her admiration for the mountains, and what she experienced through the windows of the coach and walking around the vicinity of wherever they would stop for the night was the most joyous experience of her life:

'Ending this, my most pleasant journey over the Caucasus, when I saw the Vladikavkaz plains, I was overwhelmed by a kind of sorrow, a sadness. Never have I felt so happy as those four days, flying amid the clouds, far from the concerns, troubles and intrigues of daily life.'⁵⁸

⁵⁵ A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995), p. 6.

⁵⁶ J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, pp. 11–13.

⁵⁷ Pranaičiū Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 265.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

The only year-round Georgian Military Route was already known by contemporaries as one of the most beautiful mountain passes in the world: this opinion was also confirmed in an authoritative travel guide of the time by Karl Baedeker.⁵⁹ Pranaitytė also mentions the sights and experiences that appealed to the modern traveller on the 212-kilometre route: ‘the grandiose greatness and beauty of the mountains’, ‘typical cloud-embraced locals’ (who were incidentally also identified elsewhere in the text as ‘uncivilised mountain-dwellers’), ‘the changing weather and freshness’, and the possibility to enjoy modern European comforts alongside the exotic, wild and grand natural surroundings (comfortable rest rooms, European food and safety [in her own words, ‘the chance to relax from the semi-wild Caucasus robbers, as each rest station is guarded by soldiers’]).⁶⁰

The author and her female companion chose to cross the Caucasus by horse-drawn *tarantas* (an old-fashioned open wagon). It took four days. She mentions that the distance could be covered on a regular omnibus route from April to October run by the *Société française des transports automobiles du Caucase* in 12 hours; however, ‘many tourists prefer to take in the journey by horse, rather than rushing past the beautiful mountain lookouts by automobile in a day.’⁶¹ The desire to spend as much time appreciating the splendour of the mountains is characteristic of the beginning of the 20th century, which is considered to be the period of the rise of love for the mountains in general. Nature untouched by civilisation, the chance to experience the life of a recluse, and living in simplicity, captured the minds of contemporaries, thanks to the influence of Romanticism: these elements were often viewed as a means of reaching spiritual renewal.⁶² The phenomenon of love for the mountains is also associated with the world-view of the growing middle class (the bourgeoisie), as it not only symbolised

⁵⁹ K. Baedeker, *Russia, with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking; handbook for travellers* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 473.

⁶⁰ Pranaičiū Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 240.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁶² C. Bell, J. Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity* (Westport, 2001), p. 8.

seclusion, asceticism and the exotic, but also purity.⁶³ In addition, mountain climbing could also be interpreted as a symbolic ritual, where hardship and deprivation are overcome by independently reaching the peak.⁶⁴

In the Russian Empire, as in the West, admiration for mountains grew particularly in the 19th century. The first mountaineering clubs were founded at about this time: the Alps Club in Tbilisi, the first of its kind in Russia, was founded in 1877; the Crimean-Caucasus Mountains Club was founded in 1890; and the Russian Mountaineering Society, uniting all mountain climbers in the empire, was founded in 1898. The Caucasus Mountaineering Society was founded in 1902, and the Vladikavkaz Mountaineering Society was founded in 1909.⁶⁵ Pranaitytė did not embark on any long treks when she was in the mountains, but she did mention taking a look around Mcchete, a popular site with tourists from Tbilisi, which she considered to be in the foothills of the mountains proper, and some walks she took near places where she stopped for the night, and even 'some climbing around the hills'.⁶⁶ She used the accepted conventions to describe mountains in her description of the Caucasus: 'hanging amid the clouds',⁶⁷ while the peaks were like 'enormous heads of sugar',⁶⁸ and the cold mountain air is experienced as soaking in deep enough 'to make the bones ache'.⁶⁹ Her impressions are characterised by a juxtaposition of opposites: mountains and rivers, along which 'images of nature, one more beautiful than the next' open up,⁷⁰ extremely dangerous roads winding right beside bottomless ravines, with piles of snow

⁶³ Roland Barthes states that a love of mountains, primarily the Alps, is inseparable from the Helvetian-Protestant morale that functions as a combination of the cult of nature and puritanism ('rebirth through pure air, the moral ideas dictated by the peaks, and climbing mountains as a civil moral duty'). Cf. R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, selected and translated from the French by A. Lavers (New York, 1972), p. 74.

⁶⁴ J. Frykman, O. Löfgren, *Culture Builders*, p. 52.

⁶⁵ Г. Усыскин, *Очерки истории российского туризма*, pp. 10–31.

⁶⁶ Pranaitytė Julija, *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją*, p. 251.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

amassed dangerously above them, threatening to collapse at any moment and bring down with them any poor travellers,⁷¹ and yet, descending the steep slopes, welcoming and fertile valleys awaited in the lowlands.⁷²

The poetic Caucasus space is created in the book not only in the accounts of wild nature and its ensuing dangers (abysses, storms, changes in temperature, impassable winter conditions, and avalanches) but also via her references to social threats. The author develops this theme quite well, incorporating it into the general context of stories about the fight between good and evil. She presents readers with a legend from the history of the Caucasus (a 'mythological crime story'),⁷³ soon adding that Prometheus had been chained to Kazbek, while the peak of Mount Elbrus was the first site where the Zoroastrian forces of evil appeared.⁷⁴ In her opinion, if natural dangers could be overcome and tamed, even if it is done through great suffering, then in the mountains, according to her, 'the spirit of uncertainty, alive through the centuries,'⁷⁵ was impossible to tame, and was especially dangerous.

Pranaitytė associates the mythology of the Caucasus with the history of the people living there. The mountains themselves are understood as a shelter 'for various barbarian tribes',⁷⁶ who lived independently throughout the ages and in accordance with 'their own wild and barbaric customs'.⁷⁷ Christian Georgia is considered basically as the boundary of civilisation, for the 'wild' narrative is developed once she leaves the area. The large knives and fire-arms carried around by most Caucasians were described as being intended for 'murderous deeds and robberies'.⁷⁸ And as soon as night fell, according to the traveller, every shadow could turn out to be the hand of an evil-doer, and 'one just waits for the hour of

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 261–262.

⁷² Ibid., p. 256.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 242.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 243.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 242.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 243.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 244.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 244.

death, when the brutal nails of a thief grab one by the collar'.⁷⁹ Even though Pranaitytė hardly mentions the religious beliefs of the mountain dwellers, the opinion she presents matches the observations made by Susan Layton, who studied the poetic space of the Caucasus. She found that since the early 19th century, a narrative became entrenched in Russian culture (beginning with the works of Pushkin, Bestuhev-Marlinski and Lermontov), based on which tsarist expansion into this region was justified in the name of a war against the 'wild' Muslim tribes, in order to provide protection for Christian Georgia.⁸⁰ According to her, this narrative combined the national Russian and imperialist identities. According to Pranaitytė, this narrative combined the national Russian and imperialist identities. She considered and made it clear for her readers that the central meaning of this narrative was creating the state of peace and tranquility.

Conclusions

The importance of Julija Pranaitytė's *Iš kelionės po Europą ir Aziją* does not lie solely in the fact that the author was the first female Lithuanian traveller to comprehensively document the experiences of an early-20th century modern tourist, but that the book itself was the first guidebook on the Russian Empire to be published in Lithuanian. Her descriptions had a clear function: to provide practical knowledge about the modernising and increasingly mobile world. This guidebook is also an attempt by a member of the intelligentsia to give forewarning to the more mobile yet still poorly educated working-class reader about the possible threat of being fooled or cheated, as well as giving a helping hand to the middle-class traveller. This imagined traveller, like Pranaitytė, wandering around the world in their leisure time off work, could find advice in the guidebook about useful things to have while travelling, how to communicate, and what to expect. At the same time, she sought to change society's understanding of travelling in general, and to find a new approach towards the

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 255.

⁸⁰ S. Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire*, p. 270.

meanings associated with travelling. It is at this point that we come across a more general problem intertwined with the author's position: which representations of different cultures and nations did early-20th century Lithuanians share, and what did these representations mean in the religious, imperial and international contexts of the time?

As is often the case in travel literature, history is presented selectively here, taking into account the dominant cultural monologue. This has a clear purpose in Pranaitytė's guidebook: to spread the vision of the moral and religious superiority of Western and Christian culture. In the west of the Russian Empire, where the target audience of the book lived, they are also encouraged to become more involved in the Lithuanian national movement, and it is quite paradoxical to present this recipe to future travellers: even though the ultimate goal is liberation from imperial dependence, in most cases, it is precisely the empire's religious and cultural values that serve as the initial impulse to embark on the journey.

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IMPERIJOS ATRADIMAS:
JULIJOS PRANAITYTĖS VADOVAS PO EUROPA IR AZIJĄ

Santrauka

JUOZAPAS PAŠKAUSKAS

XIX ir XX a. sandūros lietuvių inteligentės Julijos Pranaitytės *Vadovo po Europą ir Aziją*, išleisto 1914 m., reikšmingumą lemia ne vien tai, jog teksto autorė – pirmoji lietuvių keliautoja moteris, išsamiai dokumentavusi XX a. pr. modernios turistės partiją, o pati knyga yra pirmasis lietuviškai parašytas kelionių po XIX a. pab. Rusijos imperiją vadovas.

Pranaitytės kelionių aprašymai turėjo aiškią paskirtį – suteikti praktinių žinių apie modernėjantį ir vis mobiliesnį pasaulį. Šis vadovas yra inteligentijos (stiprių katalikiškų pažiūrų) atstovės pastanga perspėti judrėjantį, tačiau dar menkai išsilavinusį darbininkų klasės skaitytoją apie galimus pavojus likti apgautam ar suvežiotam, patiklios skaitytojos čia perspėjamos apie prekybos žmonėmis pavojus. Vadovas taip pat yra ir pagalbos ranka vidurinio sluoksnio keliautojui – šis numanomas skaitytojas čia galėjo rasti patarimų, ką verta turėti su savimi kelionėje, kaip bendrauti ir ko tikėtis, ką vertingo galima pamatyti turint laisvą valandėlę.

Vadove, kuriame sugulė autorės įspūdžiai iš 1911 m. kelionės, aptinkama su autorės pozicijomis susipynusi bendresnė problema: kokiomis kitų kultūrų ir tautų reprezentacijomis dalijosi XX a. pr. lietuviai ir ką jos reiškė to laikotarpio religiniame, imperiniame ir tarptautiniame kontekste. Kaip dažnai būna kelionių literatūroje, istorija čia taikoma selektyviai, atsižvelgiant į dominuojantį kultūrinį monologą. Tai Pranaitytės vadovas skirtas aiškiam tikslui: skleisti vakarietiškosios ir krikščioniškosios kultūros moralinio bei religinio pranašumo viziją. Rusijos imperijos vakarinėje dalyje, kurioje gyveno šios knygos tikslinė auditorija, kartu raginama ištraukti į lietuvių nacionalinį judėjimą. Šioks būsimiems keliautojams pateikiamas receptas yra gana paradoksalus: nors ir siekiama vaduotis iš imperinės priklausomybės, dažnu atveju, religinės ir kultūrinės imperijos vertės tampa kultūriniu pagrindu atrandant svetimus kraštus.